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Letters to The Times

Shultz Speech on Nicaragua

Sometimes—all too frequently these days—the news from Washington, and particularly those items quoting our peerless leaders, has an Alice in Wonderland aura about it.

I refer specifically in this instance to George Shultz's speech to his State Department underlings, and the TV cameras, regarding Vietnam, and what he claims is its parallel with the House vote against the *contras*, who, with almost hysterical support by the Administration to seek to overthrow the legal, elected and established government of Nicaragua. (I wonder what has become of Woodrow Wilson's basic principle of the self-determination of nations.)

Shultz mainly decries what he terms our retreat from "global leadership" after the debacle of Vietnam, which left us with more than 50,000 dead, countless wounded, and the expenditure of billions of taxpayers' dollars.

"Global leadership"? Reading his speech, one must conclude that our secretary of state defines this as fighting to free enslaved peoples in one way or another, with covert CIA conspiracies, funding, the employment of mercenaries or—as a last resort, secretly mentioned to Congress but hidden from the American people—the use of American troops.

If we accept this thesis and logically pursue it down Shultz's primrose path, we'd have to take steps to free the Yugoslavs and the Chinese, though they are "good" Communists; the Cubans, the Poles, the Hungarians, the Libyans and, oh yes—certainly the Chileans, for loss of liberty under an Augusto Pinochet must be fully as painful as under a Fidel Castro.

Certainly, we shouldn't overlook the problem posed by the enslavement of blacks in South Africa, but Shultz is assuming global leadership in this case by "quiet diplomacy," which really doesn't appear to be working too well, with more blacks being killed daily. As a matter of fact, Shultz is a little reticent on this problem of human liberty.

Summing up, I suppose all we can do is support Shultz's somewhat tortured reasoning, surprising though it may be coming from a Princeton graduate and a famed economist.

His call summons us to action: an army to free Iron-Curtain countries, commanded by none other than Shultz himself; another against Communist China, and for this responsibility I nominate White House aide Patrick Buchanan—and for the last, against the warlike and dangerous 3 million people of Nicaragua, no one should pipe us into battle but the Great Communicator himself—not, however, until he has paid his respects to the Nazi SS war dead at Bitburg.

FRANK C. SULLIVAN
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